

THE “EYE”

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH 2004

Let there be light...



Effective lighting remains a core element in your home security plan. A sensible arrangement of both interior and exterior lighting can deter potential intruders. The deterrence value of lighting is based on brightness and uniformity. Single bulbs used in exterior fixtures should be 40 to 60 watts and must be enclosed if they can be reached and unscrewed. Flood lamps should be no more than 150 watts. Many new homes are utilizing directional can lights installed in the soffits. These lights provide a soft outline of the house and dispense illumination into voids not reached by porch lights. Lights activated by motion sensors must be adjusted so that the light is activated when someone is within 5 to 8 feet. Be careful not to point the sensor in such a manner that the field extends beyond your property line. This would allow passing vehicles or pedestrians to activate the light so often that no one would notice when it is set off. Many home owners are installing pathway or garden lights around the front and back doors. They assist guests in finding your entrance and provide security benefits. These lights can be solar powered or wired in by a qualified electrician.

Interior lights should be left on when the house is not occupied. Timers can be installed that recreate your daily routine. Remember if that area is not normally lighted, don't announce your absence with an unnatural illumination. Uniformity in how we use lights is a key element in their effectiveness. Take a look at your house from the street after dark and evaluate the lighting you currently have. A visit to a home improvement center to see new products available might help you light up the night and keep intruders away.

Blast from the past

Through the years Lincoln motorists have benefited from a series of traffic studies and equipment upgrades to ease their travels. The complex traffic problems brought on by a growing city has been addressed since the first horseless carriage appeared on Lincoln's streets in 1902. Congestion has plagued the downtown area since its very first establishment as a mercantile center. Around 1910, the first traffic signals were lever operated stop-and-go devices. Officers were stationed next to these machines in key intersections under large umbrellas. In 1955, after several years of debate, one way streets were approved for the downtown area. Motorists had to adjust their routes and parking habits to meet those changes. Additional overhead traffic lights were also approved to handle cross town traffic. These lights were timed to move traffic at 35 mph and were a sign of the future.



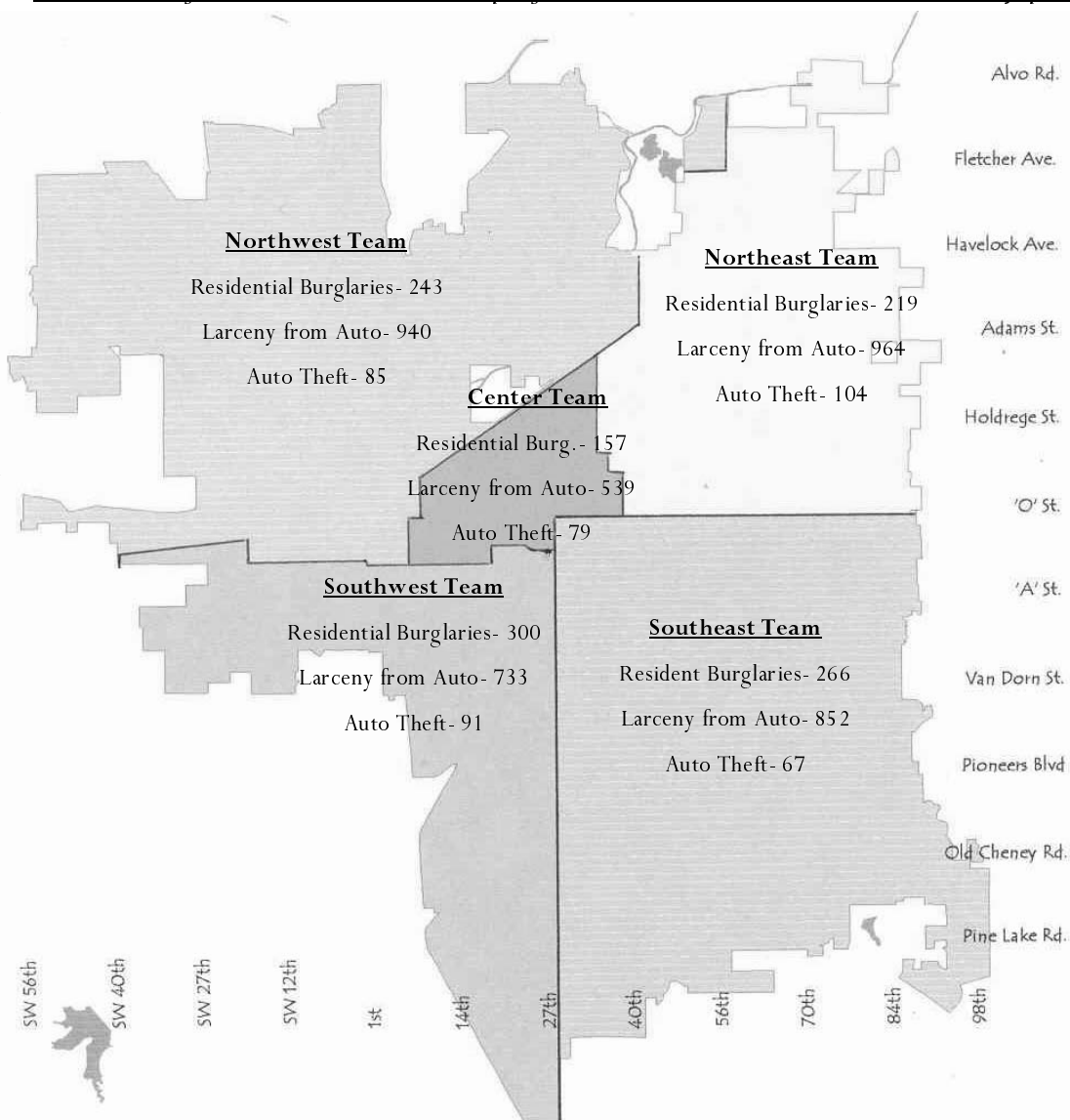
Two-way traffic on S.9th Street south of "O" Street in 1955. One-way signs would be installed later in the year. (Lincoln Police photo)

SUMMARY OF REPORTED CRIMES between 1-1-2003 and 11-30-2003*For additional information, statistics, or crime maps refer to the LPD web-site at: www.ci.lincoln.ne.us/city/police***Statistical Overview**

Through November 2003 there has been a reduction in the number of reported crimes compared to 2002. Residential burglaries went down 6.3%, larcenies from autos went down 2.7% and auto thefts went down 9.9%. In those same categories 2003 showed a 17.3% clearance rate compared to a 16.7% rate in 2002.

There was a total of 1,185 residential burglaries reported through November 2003. The pattern has remained consistent that most of those occurred at homes where overhead garage doors were left open and entry doors were left unlocked.

During this same time frame there has been a 13.6% increase in the number of commercial burglaries (586 reported through November 2003). Once again, we would encourage everyone to keep an eye on businesses

**Phone Line Test Scam**

A recent scam attempt involved a caller stating he was a service technician from AT&T conducting a test on telephone lines. The victim was asked to touch nine (9), zero (0), the pound sign (#), and then hang up. The victim was suspicious and refused to dial the numbers. The phone company was contacted and they advised that if the victim had pushed 90# the caller would have had access to the victim's phone line. The caller would have been able to place long distance calls that would have been billed to the victim's home phone number.

If any call you receive seems unusual or suspicious the best thing to do is hang up and then call the business involved to verify any request. If you believe the call was a scam call the police department at 441-6000 to make a report.

(Information from "Life Lines Magazine" & TRIAD)

On-line Account Security

Doing business on-line is very convenient but not always very secure. Before supplying personal information over the computer, check out the business you are dealing with to verify it is legitimate. You could visit the company's website or check with the Better Business Bureau. Also look for clues on your computer screen that indicate that only you and the company you are contacting can view your information. Those clues include a web address that has: <https://>, or a padlock symbol at the bottom of the page.



Be sure to keep a record of all on-line purchases just as you would a store receipt. When your credit card statements arrive check them thoroughly to verify your transactions and make sure there are no unauthorized ones. Never send any payment information over an e-mail— it is not secure and your personal data could be viewed by unauthorized people. (Visa USA info)

SAFE THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW !

Throughout the year we could suffer any number of disastrous situations. Blizzards, tornadoes, electrical storms, flooding, or any man-made catastrophe could cut us off from emergency services, our neighbors, and even our family members. Planning ahead to care for your own household first and then those in your neighborhood will help everyone remain safer in the event of an emergency. Citizen Corps, a part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has prepared the following list of things you can do:



- Check and change the batteries in your smoke alarms and replace all alarms that are more than 10 years old.
- Make sure you know where your local fire department and hospital are and post a list of emergency phone numbers near all the telephones in your home.
- Organize and practice a family fire drill— make sure your children know what your smoke detector sounds like and what to do if it goes off when they are sleeping.
- Locate the utility mains for your home and be sure you know how to turn them off manually: gas, electricity, and water.
- Create an emergency plan for your household, including your pets. Decide where your family will meet if a disaster does happen: 1) right outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, like a fire and 2) outside your neighborhood in case you can't return home. Ask an out of town friend or relative to be your "family contact" to relay messages.
- Prepare a 3-day disaster supply kit, complete with flashlights, batteries, blankets, and an emergency supply of water and food (and pet food).
- Plan a meeting with your Neighborhood Watch Group to coordinate efforts throughout your own area. Discuss with your neighbors how you would handle a disaster . Make a plan for anyone with special needs who lives close by.
- Check the expiration dates of all over-the-counter medications. Discard all that are expired and replace any that are routinely needed.
- Make sure all cleaning products and dangerous objects are out of children's reach.
- Plan to sign up for a first aid training course. Check with the local Red Cross agency for availability.



Take advantage of the fact that you have already organized as a Neighborhood Watch. Having a plan in place throughout your whole neighborhood will enhance everyone's ability to react to an emergency and make the entire group safer.

**Rabies Update** by Kris Johnson Animal Control Officer

As of November 20, 2003, 98 animals have tested positive for rabies. While the majority are wildlife, there is a possibility that human exposure can occur when handling domestic animals. Keep dogs, cats and ferrets current on their rabies vaccinations for their protection as well as yours. There is a significant difference in the procedure if there is a bite and rabies shots are not up to date.

An interesting case of rabies in New York involved a guinea pig who developed rabies after a brief encounter with a raccoon. The owner took it outside for fresh air and allowed it to roam free. The guinea pig was bitten by the raccoon and the guinea pig bit its owner a few days later. The owner contacted the local health authorities and was advised to have the animal tested for rabies. It came back positive. It did indeed have rabies. The owner immediately started post exposure prophylaxis (shots). All of this occurred in just over one month. If the owner had not contacted the local health authorities and told them of the possible exposure with the raccoon and his family pet, there would have been a totally different outcome. Keep pet rodents inside your house. If a bite does occur, report it. Give all of the details, even if they don't seem important. It could save your life. Rabies is an acute, progressive, incurable, viral encephalitis caused by the bite of an infected animal. Human death is possible, which happened with a 25 year old, healthy man in Northern Virginia in March. Rabies is serious. Protect yourself and your pets.

**Safe Travel USA**

The "Safe Travel USA" web-site offers current information to travelers about weather and road conditions. The site, sponsored by Meridian Environmental Technology Inc., includes Nebraska, South & North Dakota, Minnesota, Montana and Kansas. More states will be added as they become available. www.safetravelUSA.com

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NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH***

LINCOLN POLICE DEPARTMENT
CRIME PREVENTION GROUP
575 SOUTH 10TH ST.
LINCOLN NE, 68508

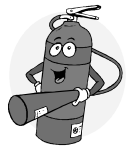
Return Service Requested



Check out www.USAonwatch.org for
national Neighborhood Watch information

HOME FIRE SAFETY

Having fire extinguishers throughout your home is a very valuable component of your overall safety. Portable fire extinguishers can put out small fires or contain larger ones until the fire department can arrive. Extinguishers should be placed near exits on each level of the house and in the garage. Make sure to obtain extinguishers that are labeled by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and check that it is rated to suppress the types of fires you may encounter in a home. Read the instructions and become familiar with the proper usage of the extinguisher. Before attempting to fight a fire consider these questions:



- Can I escape quickly and safely from the area if I attempt to extinguish the fire?
- Do I have the right type of extinguisher?
- Is the extinguisher large enough for the fire?
- Is the area free from other dangers such as hazardous materials and falling debris?

If you answer **"NO"** to any of the above questions then you should not risk your personal safety and leave the area immediately.

When you decide that you can use the extinguisher you should be familiar with how to operate it. Most fire extinguishers are constructed in a similar way. They have a pressurized canister containing a fire suppressing chemical, a nozzle where the chemical will discharge from, a lever you pull to cause the discharge, and a pin that prevents accidental discharge. To operate the extinguisher remember the acronym **"P.A.S.S."**:



- **P**ull the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you.
- **A**im low. Aim at the base of the fire where the fuel source and heat are being generated.
- **S**queeze the lever slowly and evenly.
- **S**weep the nozzle from side to side.

If the fire is bigger than you are your chances of fighting it successfully with a portable extinguisher are limited - you should leave as quickly and safely as possible and call 911 so that professional firefighters can respond. Have a family plan on how to exit your home in case of emergency and practice doing a fire drill so everyone in the household is familiar with how they should react.